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Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 LUXEMB 00083 250748Z
ACTION SS-25

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AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY

S E C R E T LUXEMBOURG 0083

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PINT IT
SUBJ: ITALIAN SITUATION

REF: STATE 014707

1. IN MY MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER THORN ON JANUARY 23, I INFORMED HIM THAT WE WERE COMMUNICATING WITH OUR EUROPEAN ALLIES ON THE ITALIAN SITUATION, TOLD HIM WHAT INSTRUCTIONS HAD BEEN GIVEN TO AMBASSADOR GARDNER AND ASKED HIM WHAT IMPRESSIONS HE HAD GATHERED LAST WEEK. (THORN HAD STOPPED IN ROME ON JANUARY 20 ON HIS WAY TO JERUSALEM LAST WEEKEND AND HAD TALKED TO ANDREOTTI, FORLANI AND OTHERS.)

2. THORN SAID THAT HIS MAIN IMPRESSIONS WERE AS FOLLOWS:
A. THE PRINCIPAL DC POLITICIANS WERE ALL POSITIONING THEMSLEVES TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF EACH OTHER'S FAILURES. THUS, ANDREOTTI HAD TOLD HIM THAT THE SITUATION WAS NO WORSE THAN IT HAD BEEN BEFORE WHILE FORLANI HAD SAID THAT THE SITUATION WAS DISINTEGRATING. BUT, THORN SAID, FORLANI WAS OBVIOUSLY HOPING THAT ANDREOTTI WOULD FAIL

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SO THAT HE COULD REPLACE HIM.

B. THE DC LEADERS WERE MOVING SLOWLY BUT INEXORABLY IN THE DIRECTION OF MORE CONCESSIONS TO THE PCI. THEY WERE BEING CAREFUL BECAUSE THEY DID NOT WANT TO BE ACCUSED OF SELLING OUT BY THOSE IN THE PARTY WHO WANTED TO RESIST. BUT THE UNIONS WERE BRINGING SUCH STRONG PRESSURE TO

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BEAR THAT BOTH ANDREOTTI AND FORLANI SAW NO ALTERNATIVE TO COMPROMISE WITH THE COMMUNISTS ALTHOUGH NOT TO THE EXTENT OF HAVING THEM PARTICIPATE IN THE GOVERNMENT. ANDREOTTI, IN PARTICULAR, WAS "PSYCHOLOGICALLY PREPARED" TO MAKE CONCESSIONS.

C. EVERYONE HE SAW HAD OBJECTED TO THE U.S. STATEMENT ON ITALY. (THORN REFERRED TO IT AS "CARTER'S STATEMENT" AND WHEN I POINTED OUT THAT IT HAD BEEN ISSUED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND NOT BY THE PRESIDENT OR THE WHITE HOUSE, THORN SAID THAT IT WAS REGARDED AND REFERRED TO NONETHELESS--NOT ONLY IN ITALY BUT ELSEWHERE IN EUROPE-- AS A PRESIDENTIAL STATEMENT SINCE IT HAD BEEN ISSUED AFTER AMBASSADOR GARDNER HAD CONSULTED WITH THE PRESIDENT.) EVEN ANDREOTTI HAD OBJECTED TO IT BUT IN A WAY THAT MADE THORN SUSPECT THAT ANDREOTTI HAD IN FACT REQUESTED THAT IT BE MADE. THORN'S OWN VIEW WAS THAT THE STATEMENT HAD BEEN HARMFUL--THAT IT PUT EVEN MORE PRESSURE ON THE DC TO ACCOMMODATE TO THE PCI SINCE TO DO OTHERWISE WOULD NOW BE REGARDED AS YIELDING TO AMERICAN PRESSURE.

D. THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS WERE HESITANT TO GO INTO ANOTHER ELECTION. WHILE THEY WERE CONFIDENT THAT THEY WOULD GAIN SOME VOTES, THEY WERE CONVINCED THAT THE PCI WOULD ALSO GAIN AND THAT THE INCREASED POLARIZATION, WHICH WOULD BRING THEM FACE TO FACE WITH AN EVEN

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STRONGER PCI, WOULD BE TO THEIR DISADVANTAGE.

2. I THEN ASKED THORN, AS THE DEPARTMENT HAD INSTRUCTED, WHAT HE BELIEVED MIGHT USEFULLY BE DONE BY LUXEMBOURG ALONE, THROUGH THE EC OR IN PARTY-TO-PARTY CONTACTS. HE THREW UP HIS HANDS AND SAID THAT HE DID NOT SEE THAT ANYTHING COULD BE DONE. ANY OUTSIDE INTERFERENCE WAS RESENTED. ITALIAN POLITICS WAS A MATTER OF PEOPLE NOT PARTIES. THE PRINCIPAL PEOPLES IN THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY-- ANDREOTTI, FORLANI, MORO AND FANFANI-- WOULD ALL COMPROMISE WITH THE PCI. THERE DID NOT SEEM TO BE ANY POSSIBILITY TO RE-GROUP AND BUILD A GOVERNMENT AROUND INDIVIDUALS WHO WERE NOT IN EITHER THE DC OR THE PCI. EVEN LA MALFA WOULD YIELD TO THE COMMUNISTS. HE ASSUMED THAT WE WOULD CONTINUE TO TALK TO CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC LEADERS, AND THAT SOME EUROPEANS WOULD DO SO TOO, BUT HE PERSONALLY THOUGHT THAT IT WOULD NOT MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE. AND, HE REPEATED, HE THOUGHT THAT PUBLIC STATEMENTS WERE A MISTAKE.
LOWENSTEIN

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